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Flashback, preserving the past for the future

Volume 46 August 1996 Number 3

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Cover photo: Washington County Courthouse shortly after its construction in 1904. This is the fourth of five courthouses built in Fayetteville. Current courthouse is at Dickson and College Ave. *Photograph from Washington County Historical Society files.*

FLASHBACK

Preserving the Past for the Future

Volume 46 **August 1996** **Number 3**

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Land, Labor, Legacy
The History of Lake Wedington

by Susan Young
Project Planner, Shiloh Museum of the Ozarks

This is a story of the land, land that was worn by crops, skinned by erosion, and parched by drought. It is a story of labor, labor provided by hundreds of workers, craftsmen, and technicians who teamed up to restore the land to productive use. This combination of land and labor produced the natural and built environments that remain today as the legacy that is Lake Wedington.

For almost 60 years, thousands of people have enjoyed the outdoor offerings of the Lake Wedington Recreation Area in western Washington and Benton counties. It is more than 14,000 acres of public lands—forested hills, rolling pastures, and yes, a lake—all under the stewardship of the United States Forest Service. The Lake Wedington area, for all its beauty today, is a child of the Great Depression, a direct result of the hard times of the 1930s and a government-sponsored project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

The story of Lake Wedington begins with the birth of a community in the mid-1800s called "Weddington." Located in western Washington County, it was named for an early pioneer family who settled there. The town grew into a center of trade for the surrounding farming area. A post office was established there in 1879, the first general store in 1882, a school about 1890, and a combination sawmill/gristmill in 1915. Sometime in the course of the little town's history, the spelling of Weddington changed to "Wedington." Farming continued to be the main way of making a living in the western Washington and Benton county areas surrounding Wedington well into the 1920s. Then, many farmers

began to have problems with soil erosion. The forests were also disappearing due to timber cutting, as well as burning of the land to keep down the tick population. It was these conditions, combined with the stock market crash in 1929, the drought of 1930, and the following Depression, that spelled economic disaster for many farmers in western Washington and Benton counties. According to Russell Layne, a lifelong resident of the area, "The old timers didn't think they was doing anything if they didn't have everything plowed up and put in wheat, oats, or corn. They growed that stuff as long as they'd grow, then it was all over. The land wore out." One study of the area showed the average family cash income for 1934 was about $60. In 1935, 80% of the people in what would become the Wedington Project area were on relief.

The plight of these farmers led to the creation of the Northwest Arkansas Forestry, Pasture, Grazing, and Recreational Project, or the Wedington Project. It was one of the many undertakings of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and was part of a nationwide government experiment to give new life to worn out land.

On January 12, 1935, the front page of the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* carried a story detailing a proposed federal land use project in Washington and Benton counties. In the article, Dan T. Gray, regional director of the land policy section of the National Resource Board, officially announced the creation of the Northwest Arkansas Forestry, Pasture, Grazing, and Recreational Project, headquartered in Springdale. It was jointly administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Arkansas. C. B. Wiggans of the University of Arkansas College of Agriculture was the project manager. In his comments to the press, Gray also put forth this challenge: "The success of . . . these projects

Home in the Wedington Project area, circa 1935. *Photo courtesy of Ann Wiggans Sugg/Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.*

depends entirely upon the way the people who live on the lands show a willingness to cooperate by selling their lands on the basis of appraised values."

Gray was alluding to the fact that before the project could begin, the land had to be acquired. This involved government appraisals, purchase, and then resettlement of families to more productive land. C. B. Wiggans chose Jim Farley, a local attorney, Justice of the Peace, and landowner near the project area to handle the legal work. Farley was well known among residents of the project area, having performed many marriages in Washington and Benton counties. Not all the families in the project area were eager to sell their land, and Farley's work as a liaison between the "government men" and the sometimes reluctant landowners proved to be as important as his knowledge of deeds and titles.

Marjorie Hart's memory of her father's decision to sell the family farm to the government is a poignant one. Her family owned a fine farm in the project area.

Because it was such good farmland, and because it had been in the family for many years, selling to the government was an especially hard decision. She recalls, "We had 120 acres. I remember going to the project area with Daddy, and his being sad that he was going to have to sell his land. I remember walking with him, just he and I. I couldn't have been more than four or five."

Government purchase of land in the Wedington Project area began in 1936. It involved the removal of 163 families; a total of 768 people. All of them were farmers; the majority being landowners or sharecroppers. Offers were made to each landowner on the basis of appraised value, and only a few declined the chance for cash money and a fresh start. When the final deals were struck, some farmers took a little part of their homeplace with them, as they reserved, for example, "the right to harvest the 1936 strawberry crop," or "the right to 20 young apple trees and a few grape vines," or "the right to all wire fence on the farm," or "the right to remove all doors and windows from the house (two doors and five windows)," or "the right to cut saw-logs sufficient to saw enough lumber to build a barn." The government also purchased 44 better farms near the project area, divided them into units of about 70 acres, and offered them as resettlement farms for the families who were displaced by the Wedington Project. Slim Swopes, a native of the Wedington area and a muleskinner on the Wedington Project, remembered, "There wasn't such a thing as money. . . . Most people was glad to get out of debt. That was the purpose of the Wedington Project." By the middle of 1936, most of the land in the project area had been optioned to the government, and families began moving away. A year later, almost 15,000 acres had been purchased or optioned at an average cost of $12.53 per acre. By 1939, when the last family left the

project area, 17,546 acres had been purchased by the government. Federal funds were cut shortly thereafter, and this would remain the maximum size of the Wedington Project.

By the fall of 1935, C. B. Wiggans had assembled a technical staff to work on the project, and headquarters had been moved from Springdale to Old Main on the University of Arkansas campus. The technical staff was charged with the responsibility of carrying out five major land use programs in the Wedington Project. The forest program was designed to develop commercial forests, control erosion, and harbor wildlife. The grassland program was designed to provide grazing land and wildlife cover and food, prevent erosion, and experiment with pasture grass. The recreation program was aimed at providing a place for boating, swimming, hiking, camping, and fishing. The wildlife program was designed to restore wild game to the area by improving habitat, restricting hunting, and introducing new species to the area. The experimental and instruction program was designed for various types of study in botany, biology, engineering, and recreation. It was a huge undertaking; one, said project architect Paul Young, Jr., where "the idea was to plan something to create work."

With the technical staff in place, it was time to assemble a workforce. Those who sold their farms to the government for inclusion in the project were given first chance for jobs. In November of 1935, Wiggans asked the district federal re-employment office for 135 laborers. By April of 1936, the labor force had grown to 304 men.

Over the next four years, the Wedington Project became a reality. Roads were built, including a two-mile rerouting of Highway 16 to accommodate the new 100-acre lake. Timber that was removed for right-of-way

clearing along the project roads was used to make fence posts and shingles. By April of 1936, workers had hewed out about 10,000 fenceposts and 30,000 shingles. Over 949,000 tree seedlings, representing 26 different species of pines and hardwoods, were planted by hand under the careful guidance of construction superintendent Chester Spies of Winslow. A five-acre tree nursery was completed. More than 6,000 acres of pasturelands were fenced and seeded with Bermuda grass, Korean lespedeza, clover, and bluestem grass. Wildlife food plots were established, covering 1,000 acres.

It is estimated that over the course of the project, some 600 men were employed there. Workers were transported to the site from outlying areas in stake body trucks. While some mechanized equipment was used on the project, a great deal of the work was accomplished with pickaxes, shovels, wheelbarrows, and mule teams. Wages ranged from 25 to 50 cents an hour. According to Slim Swopes, muleskinners received top pay: "That was skilled labor. A good muleskinner could take them lines

August 4, 1936. Excavating the core wall trench for the dam. ***Photo courtesy of Ann Wiggans Sugg/Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.***

and reach out there and pick a horsefly off of that mule and the mule would never feel that line. That was what you called a good muleskinner."

Wedington Mountain, located northwest of the lake complex, was chosen as the site for a 100-foot steel fire tower. From the tower, the entire project area could be seen. It was manned daily during high fire hazard periods. All work crews were issued fire fighting tools, and a six-man, trained fire crew was available on immediate notice. A hiking trail leading to the fire tower was constructed as part of a 40-acre picnic area at the north end of the mountain. The picnic area also boasted a springhouse and wading pool.

In the western section of the project area, on the banks of the Illinois River, a youth camp was constructed. It consisted of 25 cabins, a dining hall, and recreation hall. The camp was a popular destination for Scout troops and 4-H clubs for several years. Frances Hall was a University of Arkansas student studying home economics when she worked with 4-H groups at the camp in the 1940s. Besides the requisite ticks, chiggers, and mosquitos, Hall remembers, "The 4-H kids were usually hauled to camp in a farm truck. While at camp, 4-H'ers attended classes ranging from bread making and canning to building a sanitary privy." After a decline in usage, it was finally dismantled in the late 1940s.

The development that was the most intensive, and drew the most public interest, was the 600-acre Lake Wedington recreation area. The centerpiece was the lake itself, a 100-acre body of water created by damming Wedington Creek. The lake complex included a beach, bathhouse, boathouse, lodge, lookout shelter, 13 cabins complete with handcrafted furniture, and three picnic areas. An office, manager's residence, garage, workshop, and pumphouse made up the administrative facilities of

"Surfboarding" on the lake in 1938. *Photo courtesy of Ann Wiggans Sugg/Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.*

the complex. In describing the buildings, project manager Wiggans noted that, "As much as possible, native materials are being used. All designs are rustic and appear to be rooted to the ground."

Site clearing for the dam began in the spring of 1936. By the summer of that year, dam construction was underway. A power shovel was brought in to aid with earth moving. The dam was 900 feet long, 45 feet high, and 325 feet thick at the base. It was concrete and clay core, with earth and rock fill. Skeptics were quick to shake their heads at the thought of a lake where there once was none. "There were a lot of people who said it wouldn't fill. That Wiggans Hole wouldn't hold water," says Ann Wiggans Sugg, daughter of C. B. Wiggans. They were wrong. Work on the dam was completed in the fall of 1937, and the lake was full of water by the end of February 1938. At this point, a total of $600,000 had been spent on the Wedington Project.

Formal opening of the Wedington Project was on April 30, 1938. The day's festivities included guided

tours of the project, a flag raising ceremony by local Boy Scouts, a concert by the University of Arkansas ROTC band, box lunches for sale (50 cents each) by local Home Demonstration Clubs, and speeches by C. B. Wiggans, University of Arkansas president Dr. John Futrall, and U. S. Congressman Claude Fuller. Fuller took the opportunity to praise not only this WPA project, but all of Franklin Roosevelt's relief programs. "This project," said Fuller, "has a deeper significance, that it is a guidepost to be followed in attainment of that more abundant life that our great President has given as the goal of his administration for all Americans."

The Wedington Project was completely operational by 1941. With the outbreak of World War II, the depression ended and government priorities toward relief projects changed. Funds for further development of the Wedington Project were cut back to basic operating expenses. But the primary goals of the project, to provide jobs and reclaim the land, had been accomplished. It now remained for future generations to see that the Wedington Project continued to function.

From 1940 until 1954, the Wedington Project was managed by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. During this time, pasture leasing continued, but the forestry program was only moderately emphasized. Recreation in the area enjoyed great popularity. Because it was the only lake in the region, Lake Wedington was a favorite tourist destination. In 1951, the lake area was the site for a huge barbecue that was part of the National Chicken of Tomorrow Contest. Chief barbecuer Craig Jackson of Rogers generously shared his barbecue sauce recipe with a reporter from the *Springdale News*: 1 pint of 50-grain pickling vinegar, 1/2 cup of table salt, 1 teaspoon of black pepper, and 1/2 ounce of garlic juice. Add hot water to the above to make three pints of sauce.

With the construction of Lake Frances near Siloam Springs in the 1950s, and Beaver Lake in the 1960s, the use of Lake Wedington declined. In 1951, the University of Arkansas considered taking over the operation of Lake Wedington. Newspaper articles even made an announcement to that effect. But after further considerations, University officials decided against this step. The University of Arkansas did purchase 3,185 acres of the project near Savoy for the development of an experiment station in 1953, reducing the project area to its current size of just over 14,000 acres.

Management of the area was transferred to the U. S. Forest Service in 1960. The goal of the Forest Service was then as it is now—to manage the area's timber, pastures, minerals, water, wildlife, and recreation in compatible and sustainable ways to provide the greatest good for the greatest number.

In 1988, a group of local citizens led by Ann Wiggans Sugg, daughter of C. B. Wiggans, formed the Friends of Lake Wedington, a volunteer organization devoted to the restoration of the Lake Wedington area. To date, these volunteers have worked with the Forest Service to restore four of six historic cabins, renovate the lodge and pavilion, and install ramps, a fishing pier, and other facilities to make the park handicap accessible.

The Lake Wedington Historic District of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest was granted status on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Sixty years ago, the Wedington Project was a way to put people to work and to restore a worn out land. Today, that land, and the labor that transformed it, remains as an outdoor legacy for all to enjoy.

Lake Wedington is located in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest on Highway 16, 12 miles west of Fayetteville.

The Man Behind the Name of Fayetteville

Excerpted by Keith Newhouse from a paper by Eugene Smith of Springdale that he read to the LaFayette Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution March 9, 1996. Fayetteville is one of the many cities in the United States named for the Marquis de Lafayette.

Part I

For a man so possessed by a great, world-wide idea, so fearless, so constant, it is quite fitting that monuments should be erected and that his birthday should be celebrated. Probably there is no man in all history who has had so many cities, counties, townships, boulevards, streets, arcades, mountains, villages, and hamlets named for him, in a country to which he was not native-born, as has the Frenchman Lafayette in the United States of America.

Also, many notable statues of Lafayette stand in the city squares and halls of art, both in our country and his own. Among them there is one special statue in which the young people of America have a great interest. On the 19th of October, 1898, five million American school children contributed to a Lafayette Monument Fund.

With this sum a bronze statue was made and presented to the French Republic. Mr. Paul Wayland Bartlett was the sculptor who did the work. The statue was completed in 1908 and placed in a court of the Louvre in Paris. It was originally intended that the statue of Bonaparte should occupy the center of that beautiful court, but it is the statue of Lafayette that stands there--the "Boy" Cornwallis could not catch, the man Napoleon could not intimidate. No one can tell us just how Lafayette's statue happened to be assigned the place intended for Napoleon's; but however it was, the fact is a luminous example of how a man who loved people only to master and subjugate them did not reach the heart of the world so directly as the man who loved human beings for their own sake and to do them good.

Early Life of the Marquis de Lafayette

The castle Chateau de Chaviniac was erected during the 1300s. In 1701 it was burned, but rebuilt according to the original plans. The genealogy of the first inhabitants of the old chateau is traced back to the year 1000.

A gentleman named Motier acquired an adjacent estate called Villa Faya and became known as Motier de la Fayetee. In 1240, Pons Motier married the noble Alix Brun de Champetiers. This marriage began the lineage Lafayettes. Surrounding estates were added to the Chaviniac acreage, all of which were eventually inherited by Lafayette's father.

Lafayette's birth, September 6, 1757, is recorded in the parish register of Chaviniac. In simplest form, Marques de Lafayette was Gilbert Motier. Several titles of nobility were recorded at his birth; all of them were resigned during the French Revolution.

One month before his son's birth, Lafayette's father was killed in the battle of Minden, Germany, leaving his

young wife a widow. The baby's upbringing and his education were well tended by his mother and grandmother, a woman of very strong character. Two aunts assisted. The group of four was fondly revered by Lafayette all of his life.

Lafayette's Education

Lafayette was eleven when his mother placed him in the College du Plessis, Paris, a school for boys of nobility. His career opportunities were unlimited: courtier, lawyer, politician, writer, soldier—whatever he chose. In his family's tradition, he chose the military.

In his Chaviniac home the walls were hung and the halls filled with armored figures, a picture of his father in chest plate and armor, many ancestors shown in glistening armor or laced jackets, including a portrait of Gilbert Motier deLafayette, a marshall under Charles VII. This noble's motto, *Cur Non?* (Why not?) was adopted by young Lafayette.

The study of heraldry was most important in his education; through it he learned the history of reigning and noble families. Students were taught drawing, writing, dancing, fencing, vaulting, and riding. This included the care of horses, plus grace and skill on one's mounts. Latin was thoroughly studied. Much attention was given to wars, treaties, and acquisitions of territory. History seemed a record of battles only. Latest methods of warfare were studied. The ability to express one's thoughts clearly and forcibly in French was developed. Lafayette was not a great orator, but his diction was wonderfully pellucid and concise.

Lafayette became a voluminous writer. At times he sent as many as 30 letters but delivery was precarious because of privateers (men who captured boats and threw letter bags into the sea). Extant writings are in six volumes; correspondence with Washington, John Adams,

Ben Franklin, and other famous revolutionaries. He learned English during the six weeks of his first voyage to America.

In 1770 his mother died in Paris. He was only 13, but she, using her high-born rank, made sure he was in line for early promotions. One of his mother's uncles also died about then, leaving the young student a large, valuable estate.

His excellent reputation, plus this princely fortune, made him eligible for marriage to Adrienne Noailles, daughter of one of the most influential families in France. The union took place in Paris on April 11, 1774.

He Hears of Revolution in America

The summer of 1775 Lafayette was stationed at Metz. In attendance at a dinner given for the Duke of Gloucester, he first heard of the revolt of the American colonies. As he learned more, he determined to go to America to offer his talents for the cause of freedom and independence.

Lafayette, from art on 1977 U.S. postage stamp commemorating the 200th anniversary of his arrival in America.

Back in Paris, his immediate family and in-laws unanimously voted against his plans. The 19-year-old idealist met secretly with Silas Deane, the colonies' representative, who quickly saw what publicity and good will for the Revolution the zealous youngster could generate. Deane signed Lafayette on the promise of giving him the rank

of Major General, but with no allowance or private salary. The agreement was signed October 7, 1776.

Bad news began to come from America. It destroyed what credit the colonies had in France. No one could be found who would supply a vessel for Lafayette and his followers. Deane and others secretly tried to dissuade the young nobleman, but their arguments only increased his zeal. He answered, "I may now prove to be really useful. I shall myself purchase a ship to carry out your officers. . . In this hour of danger that I wish to share your fortunes."

A ship was bought and readied at Bordeaux with great secrecy, but as he set sail, Lafayette was told his plans were known at Versailles. When he put in at Los Pasajos, a small Spanish port, he was given letters from his family, begging him not to go, plus commands from his king, forbidding him to proceed. The Bastille was still standing and the royal power was absolute. After due consideration of his act, Lafayette with his friends sailed out of Spain to America on April 20, 1777.

After seven weeks at sea they approached Charleston, South Carolina. They went ashore in the ship's yawl and spent the night with Major Benjamin Huger, a family descended from French Huguenots.

The party left for Philadelphia via a tortuous route on which, after four days, their carriage was reduced to splinters, the horses gave out, and buying new equipment took all their ready money. The rest of the thirty-day trip to their destination they traveled on foot, often sleeping in the woods, starving, exhausted with heat, several suffering with fever. They finally arrived in Philadelphia where they expected a tumultuous welcome.

But Congress was being inundated by foreigners who demanded high rank in the American army. Further, the informative letters from Silas Deane and others in

Paris had not arrived. When the Deane correspondence did arrive, and Lafayette's letter to Congress offering his services free—even to start at first as a volunteer without rank—our founding fathers realized what a unique talent was presenting himself. They passed a resolution (July 31, 1777) accepting his services and bestowing the rank of Major General in the Army of the U.S., serving under General Washington.

When Lafayette joined the army at Washington's headquarters a few miles north of Philadelphia, he was amazed by what he found. Before him was a small army of eleven thousand men, a ragtag bunch with no knowledge of military tactics and discipline.

Ever the optimist, Lafayette perceived that this group had the making of fine soldiers, that they were being led by earnest, zealous officers. The French idealist's first taste of combat was near Chadd's Ford on Brandywine Creek, a battle labeled one of the most disastrous defeats of the Revolution. Lafayette's appointive rank gave him no command. When he saw a superior English force about to crush the Americans, he got permission from Washington to get into the fight. When Lafayette plunged into the retreating troops, he sprang from his horse and, on foot, brandishing his sword, he started forward, urging the men to follow. He did all he could to get them to form and make a stand. But panic reigned, the odds against them too great. Lafayette and other officers with him let the British approach within 20 yards before pulling back.

Wounded in First Action

A ball struck our French hero's left leg, just below the knee, during the action. Unaware of his wound until somebody pointed to blood running over his boot top, he remained with his troops until Washington turned

him over to the surgeons. This show of courage and leadership proved to General Washington that his high assessment of this young volunteer was more than justified. From then on, Lafayette was treated as the General's own son. He won the hearts of the rank and file of the American army. His broken English was becoming more understandable, but his performance on the battlefield showed he had come to this country with a true love for the principles for which this embryonic nation stood: freedom and equality.

Under the gentle care of a community of Moravians, Lafayette, after four weeks, was again ready for service. He was given command of 300 men to reconnoiter Lord Cornwallis' situation at Gloucester, opposite Philadelphia. He got so near to the British he could watch them carrying provisions across the river preparing to attack the city. With this information, he started back. His small detachment met a large group of Hessians, serving the British. He succeeded in driving them back, taking 20 prisoners.

This episode convinced Washington that his protege could be trusted with a command. Lafayette was appointed to lead a division composed entirely of Virginians. He was overjoyed; the division was weak in numbers, destitute for uniforms. He was promised uniforms and hoped to fill out the ranks with men whom he could drill and train as excellent soldiers. On December 20, Lafayette received the happy news of the birth of Anastasie, his second daughter. The whole camp celebrated.

The winter of 1777-78 saw the most difficult, the most depressing days of the Revolution. Washington and his ardent followers had suffered nothing but defeat and humiliation. The army was inadequately clothed; most had neither coats, hats, shirts, nor shoes; there was little

food; illness was rampant. Freezing took its toll of arms and legs. Their sufferings were beyond description.

May 2 brought the marvelous news that a treaty had been signed between France and the United States. This treaty assured the permanence of the U.S. as a nation. The war with England was still on, but France as an ally gave much hope and encouragement. At Valley Forge a national salute of 13 cannons was fired, followed by a Thanksgiving sermon. A fine dinner was served the officers, with the presence of Mrs. Washington, Lady Stirling, Mrs. Greene, and other wives and daughters of generals adding to the festivities.

Lafayette took part in the rejoicing, but with a heavy heart. Among the joyous letters came others telling him of the death in October 1977 of his little daughter, Henriette. He was forced to realize how far he was from home and loved ones.

By the end of October, 1778, the campaign was closing down. The French fleet was standing off our shores, effectively stating that war existed between those two major powers, England and France. This promised much more action in the spring, and Lafayette wanted to be sure to be available for it.

Lafayette Returns to France

So, with the winter lull, the young Frenchman decided to return home to see his family. With permission granted, he proceeded to Boston for embarkation. But the excitement and overwork proved more than he could take. At Fishkill he was overcome by a violent fever, putting him in bed for several weeks. There was great concern for his life. General Washington checked on him every day, and the army rank and file showed their love by their solicitude. He was slow recovering, but he gained enough strength to get to Boston. There

he boarded the *Alliance* and set sail for La Havre on January 11, 1779. The trip took a month.

Many of Lafayette's letters to his beloved wife never arrived, or they came at such lengthy intervals that his absence was made almost unbearable at times. When he did return to France, Adrienne's happiness knew no bounds, but the cloud over the hero's return was the formal errors he made at leaving.

His first appeal to Adrienne for forgiveness for his rash action was one he had to make to others. His father-in-law, in a formal letter, testified that he freely forgave this gallant returnee. But what about King Louis XVI whose direct command was not to leave France's shores? Many a man had been confined in the Bastille for lesser charges. Lafayette was brought to Versailles by his relative, the Prince de Poix. The king was most generous with his punishment. The wrongdoer was to suffer one week's imprisonment in the grand residence of his father-in-law, the palace de Noailles, after which his pardon was freely granted.

The queen showed her interest as Lafayette was making his first visit to Versailles. It was her suggestion to the king that this young gallant be made commander of a famous regiment in the French army, the King's Own Dragoons. He was stationed at Saintes and later at St. Jean d'Angely, near Rochefort. Thus he was right handy for a planned invasion of England. This plot failed to materialize. So Lafayette was free to return to Paris and Versailles. . . . *continued* . . .

Part II of "The Man Behind the Name of Fayetteville" will be in the November 1996 issue of *Flashback.*

John Mayes

Pioneer Citizen and Religious Leader in Washington County

by Lloyd O. Warren

In the process of preparing a review of the Baptist faith in Washington County (Pioneer Faith, 1994) the name of John Mayes appeared consistently in Baptist documents in the period 1848 to 1889. Who was this man, where did he come from and what were his contributions to the cultural and religious mores of the community? There was not found anywhere a formal comprehensive account of his life nor of his service to the Baptist organizations in the area. The lack of a biographical review of his life and accomplishments stimulated this effort to bring together a report on what is perceived to be some of his major contributions to the community.

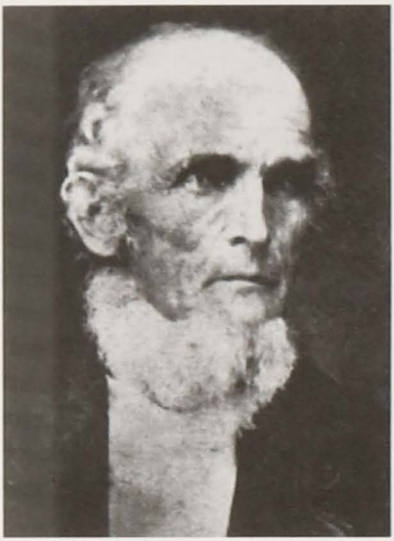
John Mayes was born in Grainger Co., Tenn., June 23, 1810. His parents were William and Elizabeth Moody Mayes who were natives of Virginia. Reaching adulthood he became a farmer and a carpenter. On March 15, 1832, he married Sarah McGhee. To this union was born four sons and seven daughters, two of whom died in infancy. The family resided briefly in Georgia in the 1830s but returned to Tennessee for a time before moving to Arkansas in 1847 or early 1848. They established residence in the White River Township in southeastern Washington County. The 1850 census of White River Township listed the family as follows: John and wife Sarah, children shown were Martha, William Zera, James, John, Mary, and Esther. The 1860 census for Richland Township added the names of James, Narcissia, and Sarah to the family group.

John Mayes was converted in 1842, and as a lay church member in Washington County soon demonstrated his dedication to his vows of faith. On the upper stem of the Middle Fork of White River, he took leadership in the organization of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, October 9, 1848. He, his wife Sarah, and daughter Martha were charter members of the new church. In 1851, the eldest son, William Zera became a member also. John Mayes was elected clerk of the church and prepared the church covenant for the congregation (Warren, 1970). This covenant as written by Mayes closely resembles the covenant subscribed to by many Baptist churches in the 1990s. In October, 1853, Mt. Zion Church served as the host church for an assembly of delegates from sister churches at which a new association, the Fayetteville United Baptist Association, was organized. John Mayes was elected clerk of the association.

By the early 1850s the Mayes family resided in the vicinity of Fayetteville. Rogers (1948) stated that the Mayes home was about two miles south of Fayetteville. A painting in the possession of Carl Ellis, without a signature or title but carrying a descriptive statement reading as follows: "Painted by Miss Sallie Bryant in 1873, this oil canvas shows the valley south of Fayetteville, Arkansas.... "At the foot of South Mountain may be seen the home of the Rev. John Mayes, father of William Zera Mayes. The latter owned a 260-acre tract of land reaching north in the valley to the incorporated limits of Fayetteville, and his home, which he built in 1873 and in which he reared his family, appears in the center of the picture. William Zera Mayes is known as the man who built Old Main at the University of Arkansas. Incidentally, the town has expanded until now the old Mayes home is within the boundaries of the city. Indistinct, and to the right of the

Mayes home, is the barn on the Governor Yell home site." (*Flashback*, WCHS)

This inscription would place the John Mayes home nearer to the center of Fayetteville than the Rogers account since it was apparently located not far from the Yell home on South College Avenue.



John Mayes, member of Fayetteville Baptist (First Baptist) for 35 years, 1854-1889. Moderator of Fayetteville Baptist Association 1871-1888. ***From WCHS photo files.***

Soon after the organization of the Fayetteville United Baptist Association, C.H. Boatright was elected missionary for the association. In his report to the White River Convention dated October 31, 1854, he stated: ". . . All the churches organized with my assistance are . . . situated in an intelligent community . . . where Baptist principles are evidently advancing. . . Two of the churches had in their organization an ordained minister and deacon constituent members. One, in the vicinity of Fayetteville, organized in August, 1854, with nine members, five males and four females, Elder T. B. Van Horn, its minister and a member, and who is a teacher in the Arkansas College at Fayetteville . . . and John Mayes, Deacon and Licentiate. They will no doubt be instrumental in rearing a large church there, to the praise of Christ."

During the same month John, Sarah, Martha, and William were granted letters of dismissal from the Mt. Zion church to join another church. Goodspeed (1889)

and Campbell (1928) lists the charter members of the Fayetteville Baptist Church including besides the Mayes family, the names of John W. Brice, Clara Watson, Amanda Peer, and T. B. Van Horn. Van Horn had been elected pastor of Mt. Zion church in March, 1854, and was succeeded by C. H. Boatright later that same year. The events recounted above contradict strongly the oral tradition that the Fayetteville (First) Baptist Church was organized in 1857. In its early years the church met at homes of church members. The church records were destroyed during the Civil War and worship services interrupted. John Mayes was evidently ordained as a minister soon after the church was organized as he soon succeeded T. B. Van Horn as pastor.

For a period of time during the Civil War, because of his position, Mayes was not permitted to visit his own home. Family members could visit him at the square. (Campbell, 1928)

Following the Civil War Mayes led in the re-assembly of church members and as a church they began to prosper, gaining 30 members in a short time. Besides meeting in private homes the congregation used the Masonic Hall as a sanctuary until their first church building was constructed in 1879 on College Avenue by John Mayes and associates.

As a member of Mt. Zion Church Mayes served as a delegate to the Mt. Zion Association in 1849 and 1852. He served as clerk of the Fayetteville United Baptist Association until it combined with the Mt. Zion Association to form the Northwestern Arkansas Baptist Association. Mayes also served as clerk for this association until it merged with the Bentonville Association. Mayes, as pastor, and as member, regularly represented the Fayetteville Baptist Church at these associational meetings.

In the pre- and post-Civil War period few, if any churches had full-time pastors. Mayes served several churches as pastor and led in the organization of others. The following is a list of churches he is known to have served as pastor: The Fayetteville Baptist (First Baptist) Church, Ephesus Baptist (Farmington), Center Point (Wyman), Valley Grove (near Elkins), New Prospect (Sulphur City), Liberty (First Baptist, Springdale), New Hope, and West Fork. Besides Mt. Zion and Fayetteville Baptist he led in the organization of New Prospect and Van Buren Baptist Churches. Three of these churches, Fayetteville, Springdale, and New Hope, remain active churches.

As noted above, few if any church pastors in the 1800s were employed on a full-time basis. Consequently, ministers engaged in secular jobs to provide the necessities of life and John Mayes was no exception. Besides his pastoral duties he worked in construction and reportedly, with his son William Zera, built several structures in the growing city of Fayetteville. Among these are noted the St. Paul Episcopal Church in the period 1874-77. He also constructed the first building for the Fayetteville (First) Baptist Church on College Avenue about 1879. (A photograph of this building is in the archives of the First Baptist Church.)

William Zera was born in Grainger County, Tenn., May 28, 1835. He was a carpenter and builder and followed that occupation in Colorado in 1859-1860. He continued that trade on his return to Arkansas and in 1873 he was awarded the contract to build Old Main at the University of Arkansas (Goodspeed, 1889, Campbell, 1951). William Zera died August 7, 1889, and was interred in the Evergreen Cemetery. Biographical information about William Zera is available in Goodspeed, pp. 987-988.

John Mayes evidently speculated in real estate as

county records show numerous land transactions to which he was a party. He also served as a justice of the peace and as a minister presided at many marriage ceremonies. He had an interest in politics, running for the position of county treasurer in 1874, but lost to LaFayette Boone, 858 to 1429 votes. In 1878, he was a candidate for the county clerk position but was defeated by P. R. Smith, 1202 to 2236 votes. Mayes, as a Mason, was a charter member of the Sylva Lodge, No. 282, which was chartered Jan. 7, 1873, and which he served as High Priest in 1874. Mayes was also supportive of educational institutions as he was a member of the group that in 1858 secured the legislative charter for the Fayetteville Female Institute which was located where the First Baptist Church is now situated.

In October, 1881, Sarah, John's wife passed away after living in the community for 34 years. An abstract from an eulogy published in the *Arkansas Evangel*, Oct. 21, 1881, describes in poignant terms the esteem accorded her by those who knew her.

"Full-crowned with all the golden fruits that knowledge together with all the love and admiration that gather about the memories of a good and pious life–our sister has fallen.

"Her life, hidden with Christ in God and yet radiant with deeds of kindness and words of love was one grand and glorious triumph, from the time of her conversion to her last lingering breath. Sister Mayes was born in Grainger County, Tenn., Jan. 18, 1815. On the 15th of March, 1832, she was married to John Mayes and for almost 50 years kept her plighted troth to him as his devoted and affectionate companion.

"She was baptized on the 1st Sunday in Nov. 1844, in company with her husband who entered the ministry about 12 years thereafter. She died . . . Oct. 7th, 1881.

Thus she lived the life of a devoted, pious, consecrated Christian for nearly 50 years, and died leaving in the hearts of many loved ones memories unceasingly fragrant. . ."

Throughout his ministry, John Mayes was active in local associations of churches and as noted previously he had served as an officer in associations prior to and following the Civil War. In 1871 on the organization of the Fayetteville Baptist Association at Mount Zion Baptist Church, he was elected moderator of the new association composed of 13 churches. At the 1872 session of the association the number of cooperating churches grew to 23. Mayes served as moderator of the association for 17 years, and called the association to order at its 18th annual session at Shady Grove Oct. 11, 1888. The minutes of that session record the actions that followed the opening activities. "Elder J. Mayes being very feeble in health so as to be unable to remain with the Association during the session, in a few impressive remarks and after quite a fervent prayer for the cause of Christ and the success of the Association, asked to be excused to return home, and on motion the hand of Christian love was extended to him by the Messengers and congregation and a liberal contribution was given to help him in his decline of life."

Burial site of John and Sarah Mayes in Evergreen Cemetery in Fayetteville. ***Photo by Lloyd O. Warren.***

Thus ended the services of John Mayes to the association and essentially to the First Baptist Church of Fayetteville. He had led in the organization of the church, had served it as pastor and "nourished" it from a

membership of nine to renewal following the ravages of the Civil War. As he faded from an active role in service to the church he surely rejoiced in the membership of 194 as reported in 1889, shortly before his death on Oct. 26, 1889.

Remarkably, there was no recognition of his death in the 1890 minutes of the Fayetteville Baptist Association. Locally, the *Fayetteville Democrat*, Nov. 1, 1889, carried a short statement concerning his death and on Nov. 15, 1889, Washington Masonic Lodge No. 1 issued a tribute to John Mayes.

Descendants of John and Sarah are not presently known. The 1895 minutes of the Fayetteville Baptist Association reported Martha's death which occurred Nov. 11, 1894. Sarah, William, John and Martha were interred in Evergreen Cemetery. Readers who can contribute additional information on this family are encouraged to transmit it to the Washington County Historical Society.

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God Blessed Me With a Long and Happy Life

written by Elizabeth Fine Brown in 1967

I am Elizabeth Fine Brown, born April 14, 1870 and at age 16 was given in marriage to Jimmie Brown by my parents, Jack and Eliza Fine of Brentwood, Arkansas.

There was a double wedding on that day December 26, 1886 at 11 o'clock Jennie Brown and Dudley Parker were married with Jimmie and I standing by them. They were married in the home of Jennie's parents, Uncle Phelen and Aunt Lottie Brown.

After the ceremony we all came to the home of my parents where Jimmie and I were married at 12 o'clock with Jennie and Dudley standing by us. We were married by John Woolsey. About 40 friends and relatives were present and after the ceremony a large dinner was served to all the guests by my parents.

At 1 o'clock we four left on our wedding tour - although we didn't go to Europe!

Dudley and Jennie rode horseback about 7 miles north and spent the night with Jennie's Uncle Martin Brown and his wife Phoebe and a good supper was served to them.

My husband and I drove in a one horse buggy about 3 miles east of West Fork to spend the night with my Cousin Joe Malone. A good supper was served us. Ours was the only buggy I knew of anywhere near our home in Brentwood.

The next day the four of us returned to Brentwood where another big dinner was served to us at the home of my husband's parents, his father Jim Brown and his Step Mother Aunt Pop.

The following day another big dinner was given for

us at the home of Jennie's parents, Phelen and Lottie Brown. What a wonderful time we were all having.

Dudley's foster parents Mr. & Mrs. Parker invited us to their home for supper the next night. After the meal was finished Dudley remarked "Well they have just been feeding us up on soft corn so long we will never be able to eat solid food again!"

Dudley was a smart man. He was Justice of the Peace at Brentwood for a number of years. He also served as Constable.

Well, my husband and I spent most of our young married life in Brentwood. Our old home town. He was a farmer and blacksmith by trade. One thing we always disagreed on he wanted to move ever time the moon changed, often didn't want to wait for that! I wanted to settle down somewhere and stay.

Then he decided he wanted to go to Santo, Texas so he went. He soon wrote for me to come to him by train. It really was a tiresome journey with my baby in my arms and two others too small to take care of their selves. A good man sitting not far from me could see what a time I was having with my little children so he volunteered to help me. I really did appreciate his help.

Soon after arriving in Santo two of our children came down with slow fever. We lived in an old frame house. The old fireplace had a brick chimney up to the shoulder, then heavy boards finished the chimney up to the top of the roof.

The children were lots better and so I had helped them up to change their bed linen. I threw on some dry wood for a quick fire to keep them warm and the next thing we knew the roof was on fire at the chimney. No such thing in that place as a fire truck.

When the fire was discovered a little girl ran down the road hollowing "Fire, Fire," as fast as she could. Men

came hurrying - some on horses - some on foot carrying fire buckets to fight the blaze but no ladder! So off some one rushed to get a ladder!

While all of this was taking place I was scrambling up on a small shed close to the rear of the house. A neighbor woman reached a bucket of water and a cup up to me and up to the top of the house I went and by splashing a little water a time on the fire, using the cup, I put the fire out.

Not till then did I see the house surrounded by men waiting for a ladder! There I stood scarcely knowing a one of them and scarcely remembering how I got up there much less how I was going to get down! It is funny to recall it now but it wasn't funny at the time.

While living in Santo, Texas I met such a good woman. She was like a mother to me. Came to my house and helped me with my sick children. Not one thing that she didn't do to help me if it was possible for her to do. Those days we couldn't run to a restaurant for a meal - usually cooked our food and took it with us.

We were planning to leave next day to come back to Arkansas. Then my good Mother said to me "Now, I am cooking dinner for you all - be sure to come," so we went for a good dinner. When we were ready to leave I said to her, "Mrs. Dalton, I don't know what I can ever do for you for being so good to me. If I was going to stay by you I might he able to do something for you but now I will have to leave you." She smiled and said "Do something for some one else." I will never forget those sweet words.

We lived in Brentwood until part of our children were married. We moved west of Fayetteville and lived a while. Also lived at Farmington. My husband's health began to fail and he could not do hard work so he dealt in real-estate buying and selling homes for a small profit.

He owned several homes that I never saw. His health continued to fail and so we moved to Fayetteville where I could work to support us.

I run a large rooming house on the square for 3 years. I really enjoyed my hard work there in many ways. We met so many nice people - some not so nice. We made lots of good friends and people from far away states came to spend the night - telling us that friends of theirs had told them to be sure and stay with us if they were ever in Fayetteville. We always made every one welcome and my husband and I would often sit in the lobby visiting with people till 12 o'clock or later.

But after 3 years I decided to give up the rooming house and work by the day. I worked in some of the nicest homes in Fayetteville.

I worked 3 years in young Dr. Charles Paddock's home - did not even have Sunday off. I worked for 1 dollar a day - my dollar on a shelf for me to pick up as I left at 6 o'clock on the dot. It sure would be hard to find any one who would work for that price now. I returned to work next morning at regular time.

Then while still working I received a letter from my dear son Will saying Mother you are not able to work like you are and you must come and live with us and I am not taking no for an answer. Set the date when he would be there and said for us to be ready. So he came and took us to live with them.

We had a room to ourselves and no King or Queen could have ever been treated with more love and care than we were by him and his dear wife Lucille ever minute we was with them.

After a long stay with them my husband especially, wanted to come back to our home in Fayetteville - We thought for only one reason - he had many friends there that he had known for so long. He missed being able to

visit with them to help pass away the lonely hours. The good people in Tulsa were all strangers to him.

So Will and Lucille brought us back to our old home in Fayetteville.

Soon after we returned we were both baptized in to the Church of Christ of which I am still a member.

We had a family of 8 children - 3 boys and 5 girls.

Will A. Brown married Lucille Hamer. Most of their married life was spent in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Annabel Brown married Tom Capps and they live in Stilwell, Oklahoma. Zella Brown married Lester Broyles and their home is near Farmington, Arkansas. Mable Brown married Tully Wilson but they were divorced and Mable married the 2nd time to Homer Sellers. A better man sure would be hard to find. They live in Corpus Christi, Texas. Delmar Brown married Stella Underhill and they live in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Oval Brown married Marie Sills and they live in Farmington, Arkansas. Leona Brown married Lloyd McGowan and they live in Fort Smith, Arkansas. We lost our 6th child, a little girl named Mamie Ethel Brown. She died at age two years.

My husband passed away in 1940. I am still living alone at age 96 but do not feel alone for God is with me. I am still able to take care of my home and some business. My good son-in-law Lester Broyles takes care of the more special business for me and see's that it is done right. A better man than Lester Broyles would be impossible to find.

As I have often said, God has blessed me with a long and happy life in many ways, though my life has not altogether been a bed of roses. I have had many trials of grief and trouble, although things never so bad that we do not have a lot to be thankful for.

When I think of all the work I have done I don't see how any one could still be here to tell about it.

At this time I still have 6 children living.

28 - Grandchildren

63 - Great Grandchildren

19 - Great - Great Grandchildren

I attended a Fine Reunion, August 14, 1966, Prairie Grove, Arkansas. There were 117 people - I was the oldest person there.

I told them I would soon be an Old Lady.

Growing Old

In truth, growing old is a wonderful thing
It's like growing in autumn the flowers of spring
And makes growing old a beautiful thing.
The years roll away, yet this hope lives on
And memory often brings back joys of long ago,
So it makes growing old a beautiful thing
For under the walls is a sunlight slope where
Blooms a flower that we call hope. The years
Roll away, yet this hope lives on.
Hope lives on - the eyes may be weak and
The head turned white, but deep in the heart
Is a warm delight and makes growing
Old a beautiful thing.

written by Elizabeth Brown (age: 98)

From the June-July 1951 issue of *Flashback.*: "Mention of the Springdale woolen mill in the last issue of FLASHBACK has jogged the memory of an old-timer. He tells us that when Hugh Dinsmore was serving this district in Congress, he had goods woven by the Springdale mill, then had the material made into a suit by a Washington, D.C., tailor. Whenever the opportunity offered, in the nation's capital, Mr. Dinsmore would call attention to the fact that the material in his-suit had been woven by a woolen mill in Arkansas."

Boonsboro and Cane Hill Letters of Ava Leona Russell, 1878-1883

The following letters were written in Boonsboro and Cane Hill from 1878 to 1873 by Ava Leona Russell and her mother and sisters—Ava O. D. Russell and Sevie Russell Trout and Mollie Russell Moore. These were submitted by Bill Russell (14 Leeward Court, Maumelle, AR 72113), who has the orignials. Some have been copied by the Arkansas History Commission.

Ava Leona Russell married Benjamin F. Norwood in Boonsboro March 1883 and passed these letters to her daughter who in turn passed them on to her daughter, Sara Lee Suttle in Salem Oregon.

April 14,1878

Boonsboro, Ark.

My Dear Sister Mary;

I think its high time to interrupt this period of silence that exists between us for it weighs like a spell of nightmare on my spirits. I have not heard from any of my family in 6 months. Have written twice but received no answer.

We are all at home except Dr. R.—he left a few days ago to go and perform some surgical operation on some person living 50 miles below here. Are you still living in the vicinity of Gainesville and what has become of your dear children? How I would love to see them and you.

Ava and Sevie are grown in size but not in manners and learning. We are just getting through with Measels. Ralph was the last to have them and he is just up. Seaborn is living with us and making a crop for himself on my land free of rent. His father wanted him to become a Surgeon but Seab fancies a farmers life and the company of girls.

Spring is here with its wealth of buds and blossoms and the best prospect for wheat that we've had in several years. Have

you never thought of leaving Georgia and going somewhere to make a fortune? Suppose we take our boys to Florida and put us out an Orange orchard? In ten years it would be an independent fortune for us and support us in our old age. Study it out and let me know what you think of it for if we can find a healthy location there is surely money in the Orange trade.

We have a good and pleasant home here but this is a hard country to get money in. We raise all the bread and meat and-fruit we can consume but we need money to pay taxes and buy clothing and for other purposes too numerous to mention, and something to bring money in when we are unable to work for it any longer and when our children have left us and set up for themselves. Write and tell about your children. It is most astonishing how little sisters can know of each others children. Of course I know Penn and Eddie and have heard of Ethel—but of their dispositions, tastes, and temper I know nothing. But nothing would delight more than to read a description of each one personally from your pen.

My youngest boy is five years old and I feel like I am growing old and I hope better in heart. Ava and Sevie have joined the "Church of God" and are to be immersed in baptism soon, and though they are young and passionate, I pray that they may hold faithful to the end. Where is sister Sallie and her husband? What has become of all the folks—Bros. Jim, Ma, Bro. Jo was at Hot Springs when we last heard from him 5 or 6 months ago.

Did the fire in Hot Springs injure Bro. Sevier much or was he burnt out—if so was he insured?

Now sister please answer soon—Your affectionately,

Ava O. Russell

April 29, 1883

Boonsboro, Arkansas

My Dear Child:

Eric spent the day at Mollies and she sent word that John D. was coming by soon in the morning going to the burg and that she would leave her letter unsealed so that I might send a word

or two. Today has been the happiest day that I have spent in some time as I had letters from all. Yourself and Ralph and Pa— all well—of course Ralph cannot be entirely well but he is at work again. Thank God for His mercy and goodness.

Oh Ava, my dear child. Your words were so comforting to me for they came from your heart. I think of you many times every day and say things to you that you do not hear—often in the garden or among the flowers in the yard or in my prayers at night. You come into my mind.

Eric and Dick have been 3 days trying to catch Cricket and just yesterday got him up. Dick gets on Cricket and has Claudia and E. and Jim and Will to wave their hats and yell and away goes Cricket almost flying—for a short distance and back they come again for another run.

Sevie and Tate called on Mrs. McFarland today. I nurse while Sevie cooks. I wash dishes twice a day usually and do all the milking and churning. Whitey gives about a gallon of milk a day and we have butter from her milkf or breakfast everyday. Maggie Bottoms is going to live in the old house at Rutherfords.

Love to you both and write soon to your affectionate mother, . . . A.O.R.

June 18, 1883

Boonsboro, Arkansas

My Dear little Ava:

I was over at Mollies and spent the day there yesterday and lay down on the floor to take a nap and cool, when I awoke Mollie was writing to you and offered me paper to write too, but I preferred coming home and writing on Monday.

Well the 15th Inst. was Ericks birthday, the 16th Jimmie Trouts and the 22 will be yours. So we baked some cake, made some cherry pies, bought some candy and celebrated the three eventful days all at once and to celebrate his more than the others Jimmie Trout took the Chicken Pox and was very fretful and he now has a speckled face—but his curls are as sweet as can be. There he is now kicking up his little heels in his Ma's lap and

trying to nurse at the same time and his Ma says she believes he will wean himself soon.

Sevie has raised about a hundred chickens and here's half a dozen of them running around the entry and Erick lying down on one side of it too lazy to run them out. Old Whitey the Cow took a notion to go back to Eureka and was gone two weeks before we found her on the Illinois River at the Widow Reeds.

Your Pa is at Eureka and will not leave on a surgical tour until after Court at Fayetteville which will be some time near the 20th of July. Bose and John and Garrison are all at Rutherfords this afternoon helping him to reap his wheat. The wheat crop is very light in this neighborhood but much heavier near Fayetteville. Do see if you can get Ralph to write to you often. He only writes to any of us semi-annually and l want to hear from him more often than that.

The Pups that Mollies Dog raised turned out to be Hound like. Jim and Bose have not been together since they came home. Mrs James Jr. Jones, your music teacher, has been spending the winter with her husband in Washington city—he having been elected Congressman from his District. The weather is very warm—Dick will lay by his crop this week and will start to school to Lizzie White the first of July. She will teach a free school at Bethersday of 4 months duration. Andrew Moore is dead—Eddie Troutt is still in Texas. Ginny spent a week with Sevie not long since. Mrs. Troutt is living with Hasserman. Garrison and Jim are keeping Bach—at the old home. Maggie Bottoms is talking of going to her sisters in Little Rock.

Can you read this? I would write more but will have too much for a 3 cent letter. Write soon, my best— Love to both of you,. . . A.O.R.

Boonsboro, Ark.

June 17, 1883

My Dearest Sister Ava:

It seems as though you have quite forgotten your relations in this part of the state. How I have been looking for an answer to

my last letter for a week and not a word yet.

Ma is with us today—Mr. Moore went over to get her so she rode the gray mule. We are not very well—been nursing the little Troutt, he has the chicken pox and is so fretful. Park has it too but is getting well now. We will cut our wheat this week. Wish you would come over and help cook a jolly good dinner. Sevie says she will help me but I am afraid the boy will not be well enough.

Our garden has come in at last. Had peas, potatos, beans, beets, onions for dinner today. oh yes and cherry and dewberry pie too. have lots of nice chickens. Ma and I went fishing last Monday and Ma caught the largest trout I ever saw—used a small fish for bait. We caught a fine lot of fish. Sevie caught a match for it in the evening in all we caught about a gallon. Pa is at Eureka Springs again, says Law is going to move to the bottoms soon. Ava, you and Mr. Norwood must write to us. I have not heard a word from Ralph in a long time though I just keep writing.

(June 20th) Well sis I have just been down in the field yesterday and today helping the boys hoe the corn though I do more bossing than work. Mr. Moore is helping Mr. Ruth harvest. Dick is plowing for us while John is gone. There was a picnic at Salem Springs Saturday and as usual a fuss. Mr. Morgan drove in the crowd with a barrel of Whiskey and commenced setting it out to the Indians but was stopped by the time all the men got drunk and to fussing

Our free school will commence at Bethesda Monday. Guess Miss Lizzie White will teach. Dutch has left Mrs. Rutherford and gone to Mrs. White. Jimmie Tate says tell you that you promised to write her. She sends her best respects to you. All join in much love to Aunt Ava and Frank. I promise to write better when Mr. Moore got the new ink but you can see it is messy.

Your Affectionate Sister, Mollie

Boonsboro, Arkansas
July 11, 1881

My own dear Sister,

I wrote you a note and sent it by dear little Boas as he and Miss Jennie were going to start in the morning. Boas and I went to church over at Eureka last Sunday and ate Dinner with Kate Rainey.

Tom Walton is about to die—he has got the chills and the Doctor told him he wouldn't live if he took the chills anymore. He is at his sisters and if I had any horse to ride I would go to see him but don't you tell Boas that. Blessed ole Hugh went by this evening as I was down at the milk pen.

Nettie Coal and Dave Wallace are married by this time. She went to him at Dardenelle. Emma Whinley and her cousin have gone off to get married. . write just as soon as you get this..

...Your affectionate Sister, Sevie

Boonsboro, Ark.
April 8, 1883

My dear Sister Ava,

Well sis I have quite a number of visitors this week. First Ma, Sevie, and Miss Addie Park came tuesday—then Belle and Ossie that night and next day.

We went fishing and caught a fine mess. Yesterday Lillie, Alice, Sue and her children came by going fishing Gate went with them while I stayed and prepared dinner for them. Gate went to church at Bethlehem last Sunday saw a great many of your old friends. . . Florence Gr., Miss McClure, Mr. and Mrs. Bob R., Mr. and Mrs. Thie Evans were among the rest. Saw your old Flame Hugh W. . . She said he looked as old and rusty as an old Bacon rind.

Pa is still at Eureka—don't know when he will be home. Dick has his crop put in and I tell you it is a good one too. He works hard all the time..going to make a worker I tell you. He has learned to grab fish too don't you think? Alice had on a

pretty gold ring as large as Belles only she wears it on her fore finger.

Accept a sisters warmest love.....Mollie

Boonsborough, Ark.
May 28, 1884

My own dear darling sister,

Tonight I will try to answer your long neglected letter which I had ought to have answered long ago but I just kept putting it off.

Boas came home and stayed a week and started off again—has been gone 3 weeks and I tell you I will be the gladdest girl on earth when he comes back to stay.

Frank Henry's wife is lying at the point of death. Typhoid fever and Flux. Her baby only weighed 2lbs and a girl at that. Albert Fletchers wife has been in bed for 5 months and I don't know whether she has been confined yet or not. Moran Slachs wife has a fine boy—got through alright. Maggie Campbell and Hugh Scott was married last night.

There is to be a grand exhibition at the college next week. Oh how I wish you were here to go with me. We would send up a fine time showing our grand sons wouldn't we Av? Write soon I am as everyour loving little sister....Sevie

Cane Hill, Ark.
December 6, 1882

Ever dear sister'

Boas and Jim started week before last and I am staying at Mary Spencers while they are gone.

Maggie Henry came over and stayed all day last week. I got me a new wordid dress and made it by those patterns you cut me and it is just beautiful. They are going to have a Christmas Tree at the College and we will go for sure by doggies. Aunt Alta Moore got her arm broke and she came over last week and stayed 3 days and Dr. Blackbern took the board off it. Alice and

Bell have been out to see us since I came here.

Huey Morrow is to be married tomorrow night. She is going to marry a man that lives in Little Rock. Ellen and Hugh says tell you to come out here that they live on top of the Berg. Hugh Spencer is in from Texas but is going to start home in the morning.

I live in front of the McClellan Hotel and on top of Edmastin street where we have nothing to do but to sleep and eat. Lillie received a letter from Ralph not long ago and she says she wishes you would write to her for she don't know what you got mad at her for. The ink is froze so hard I can't write much. Tempy Morse died last week and so did Ab. Bates. Give my love to all up there and accept a share foryourself...write soon...from your affectionate sister, Sevie.

Boonsborough, Ark.
Nov. 12, 1882

Dear Ava,

Yours of the 6th came to hand and was glad to hear from you. I worked awfully hard this week, quilted until Friday, then washed and ironed and cleaned up for Ossie and Bell sent word they were coming Saturday but they didn't—it rained.

The meeting lasted at the White Church 15 days and there was 30 professions and 19 joined the church and the meeting at Greyspoint lasted the same and there was 30 joined and Lakey baptised them at Dutchtown.

Lillie Spenser received a letter from Ralph not long ago but he never said a word about Uncle Jo being dead. I want you to write and tell all about it. Give my respects to Mrs. Land, love to all... Your sister Sevie.

More about this Russell family can be found in the May 1994 *Flashback*, pages 44-48.

CYRUS A. SUTHERLAND

1995 Citizen of the Year

CYRUS A. "CY" SUTHERLAND is a native of Rogers, Arkansas. In 1949 received he a master's degree in architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. During World War II he served in the Medical Administrative Corps .

Cyrus A. Sutherland

Sutherland began serving on the faculty of the School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas in 1958 and continued on the active faculty until his retirement in 1990. He taught design, ancient architecture history, and historic preservation. His wife, Martha, is an associate professor in the School of Architecture.

His research on historic buildings of Arkansas led to his appointment in 1971 to the State Review Board for Historic Preservation, a position he presently holds. Service on this board has resulted in his indirect involvement with the nomination of more than 4000 properties in Arkansas to the National Register of Historic Places.

From 1974 to 1994 he served on the Arkansas Territorial Restoration Commission. He is a founding board member of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas. This body created the endowed Sutherland-HPAA Fund which grants an annual scholarship to a selected student in the School of Architecture at the UofA.

In the mid 1980s he co-authored and served as on-camera-host of a three-part film series "Arkansas: Its

Architectural Heritage–1800 to the Present." These films were originally shown on AETN and continue to be used through the state public school system. Sutherland is an active consultant and supporter of major preservation projects in northwest Arkansas and plays a preservation advocacy role throughout the state. He has a particular concern for folk and vernacular forms. He was the recipient of an Alumni Association Faculty Achievement Award in 1986. In 1991 Sutherland was appointed State Advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Cy Sutherland has been a longtime member of the Washington County Historical Society, serving two terms as president. The past two years he has escorted and narrated a WCHS-sponsored "Rambles" bus tour of buildings and other sites of historical and architectural interest in Washington County.

From the June-July 1951 issue of *Flashback.*: "Because of the many activities in June—University commencement, Folklore festival, Chicken-of-Tomorrow contest—we have postponed our pilgrimage to Cane Hill until the last week in July. It will be worth waiting for, and it should be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding of our historical outings. Prof. Davis Richardson, who knows every spring and sunken road in the Cane Hill area, will be our guide. The old homes, the sites of the early colleges, the huge waterwheel of the old mill, the ruins of the kilns of the Boonsboro pottery, the graves of the soldiers of the Revolution—John Carnahan and Jacob Pyeatt —all will take you back to the pioneer past and leave you with romantic memories."

Maybe Professor Richardson was the Cy Sutherland of yesteryear!

Genealogical and Photo Files Moved

The Washington County Historical Society Genealogy & Library Committee has been working on the task of relocating the library and genealogy files to public facilities with longer hours and paid staff. The committee is very interested in preserving the collections of WCHS by sharing them with the public in a safe and protected environment.

The genealogy files have been moved to the Fayetteville Public Library, 227 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701 (Grace Keith Genealogical Collection) All queries may also be sent to the above address. WCHS will no longer be accepting queries. The library staff will be happy to assist WCHS members for a small fee. The library is open Monday.-Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and we hope these extended hours and paid staff will be very useful to our WCHS members.

The WCHS photograph collection is now located at The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, 118 West Johnson Avenue, Springdale, AR 72764. Their hours are 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Manon Wilson, librarian, will be happy to make arrangements for copies of any photographs you may need. The committee feels strongly that the photographs are now in an archivally safe and protected environment, yet accessible to the public longer hours with paid staff.

WCHS will continue to be available to help you place items of historical interest in the proper facility. It continues to be our goal to preserve and protect the history of Washington County.

There is no longer a part-time secretary in the WCHS office in Headquarters House. For the present the office will be open only from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Thursdays, and from 10:00 a.m to noon on Saturdays.

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Here is the Scoop on the Ice Cream Social

The 26th Annual Washington County Historical Society Ice Cream Social is scheduled for Saturday, August 17, 1996 at Headquarters House, 118 East Dickson in Fayetteville. It will once again be a day full of family fun, entertainment and, of course, ice cream and cake!

This year's Social will take place from 4:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. and will feature musical performances, games and story-telling for children, tours of Headquarters House, antique autos on view, costume parades every hour, a collectibles bazaar, and special historical replica items for sale.

Members of the Society and visitors are encouraged to wear period costumes to the event and contribute to the fund-raising efforts by donating collectible items for the bazaar. Unwanted treasures of all types, as long as they can be carried by one person, are needed for the bazaar, such as small pieces of furniture, decorative items, lamps, pictures, old kitchen accessories, pottery, books (no textbooks, please, since they don't sell) and other items. Donated items may be brought to Headquarters House on Thursdays between 1:00 and 4 :00 p.m., Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon., or you may call 521-2970 and make arrangements to have your collectibles picked up by Society members.

Special items for sale at the Ice Cream Social include old post-cards of Arkansas, with emphasis on Northwest Arkansas, and unique miniature plaques featuring replicas of historic buildings.

The price of admission to the Annual Ice Cream Social is only $5 for adults, $2 for children under 12, or $12 for a family with children under the age of 12. Included in these modest prices are all the cake and ice cream you can eat, tours of Headquarters House, and a trolley ride to Ridge House for tours there.

If you have them, come dressed in your finest 19th Century fashions. The Ice Cream Social is a family event you don't want to miss!

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